UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/626
11 August 1997
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 7 AUGUST 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LUXEMBOURG TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement issued on 31 July 1997 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union concerning the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jean-Louis WOLZFELD
Permanent Representative of
Luxembourg to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement issued on 31 July 1997 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

The European Union wishes to convey a message to the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to the entire population of the country.

The message comes at a time when a new Federal President is taking up his post and as important elections are about to be held in Serbia and Montenegro.

The European Union would like to draw attention to its statement of 9 April 1996 on recognition by European Union member States of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. At the time of the Council's decision taken in Luxembourg on 29 April 1997 to grant autonomous trade preferences to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for 1997 the European Union made its position clear. On that occasion, it published a statement in which it expressed hope that the González report would be fully and quickly implemented.

The Yugoslav authorities have failed to take into consideration the package of recommendations made in that report, in particular, facilitation by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) of dialogue between Government and opposition, further adjustments to the draft media law and genuine reform of the electoral and judicial systems.

Moreover, several recent developments in politics in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia give rise to serious concern. Recent legislation in Serbia is leading the country away from true democratization and is jeopardizing opportunities for meaningful dialogue between the country's different political movements. The international community cannot remain indifferent to this development, which is particularly serious with regard to electoral laws and the media. Tension in Kosovo has recently been heightened by judgements that run counter to equitable legal standards. One disturbing factor is the apparent indifference of the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the signs directed towards them.

It is now essential to stress the risks inherent in a policy that is leading to a worsening of the political climate, a deterioration in the economic situation and heightened ethnic tension in Kosovo and the Sandzak.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia faces a clear choice between the road of democracy leading to economic recovery and its integration into the international community and the road of confrontation with all its negative economic and social effects on the people of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The European Union requests all political authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and particularly the new Federal President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, to demonstrate clearly willingness to take up the political and

economic challenges of the moment and to assume the responsibility that this implies.

Holding free democratic elections under genuine OSCE observation may be regarded as a step in that direction.

The European Union urges the Yugoslav authorities to keep to their commitments, to accept OSCE (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)) observation of the elections, including during the election campaign, and to guarantee freedom of expression and of information.

In view of the foregoing, the European Union exhorts all opposition political groupings to engage themselves fully during the period of the electoral campaign and to assume their political responsibilities.

Only functioning democratic institutions will be capable of healing the internal divisions of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and securing stability in the country and the region as a whole.

The European Union places great emphasis on the central importance of respect for human rights and the rights of minorities. It stresses the importance of negotiation and calls for avoidance of the use of violence and recourse to force, especially in Kosovo.

The European Union adjures all the political forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to move clearly towards true integration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the international community.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia must rebuild its economic activity. The international community is ready to contribute to that process, but expects the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to cooperate to create the conditions necessary for it to take place.

Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and the Czech Republic align themselves with this statement.